



## ***Healthier and fairer communities for all*** **A Government for Faster and Fairer Climate Action**

### **Stop Climate Chaos Coalition**

Pre-election briefing, November 2024

Stop Climate Chaos is the civil society coalition campaigning for Ireland to do its fair share to tackle climate change. The Coalition's members include many of Ireland's leading international development, environmental, health, youth, and faith-based organisations. Preventing climate breakdown is the defining global challenge of our age. Stop Climate Chaos (SCC) was launched in 2007 based on a recognition by members that the objectives which our organisations serve are under significant threat from the global advance of disastrous climate change.

Climate change is already driving increasingly extreme weather around the world from storms and floods to droughts and wildfires. Current levels of ambition and action on climate change fall far short of what is needed to deliver on the temperature limits set out in the Paris Agreement.

Irish emissions have begun to fall thanks to the climate law we campaigned for. But it's not fast enough and it's not fair enough, too many people are left behind. Ireland's inadequate climate action is leaving people in the cold domestically, and causing devastating impacts globally. Climate-related loss and damage escalate with every fraction of a degree of global warming, but limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as required by the Paris Agreement, would substantially reduce those impacts. This means that for every unambitious or missed target, Ireland contributes to the escalating climate losses and damages experienced by communities worldwide.

Parts of the state are dragging their heels, big business is lobbying to delay or derail action and some politicians are sowing disinformation and division for short-term gain. Progress is too slow and does not reflect Ireland's fair share of action. Ireland might have increased its climate finance in recent years, but it is still only a fraction of our fair share of international climate finance owed to Global South countries facing the greatest impacts of climate change.

We must always remember that there can be no climate justice without respect for human rights. We must keep pressure on for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and reject destructive and polluting militarism.

What we need now is the political will to lead the transition, and in a democracy, especially at election time, political will springs from what voters say to politicians. We're saying loud and clear that what we need is a Government for faster and fairer climate action.

**In the upcoming election, SCC is calling on the next Government, and all the parties and independents in the Dáil, to commit to:**

1. Government leadership, action, and accountability to ensure a just and green transition
2. International climate action that is fair and funded
3. Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels
4. Clean, affordable renewable energy for homes, not data centres and big tech.
5. Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport
6. A fair deal for farmers, to feed Ireland and restore nature and
7. A rapid response to the climate crisis as a critical public health issue

### **1. Government leadership, action, and accountability to ensure a just and green transition**

***The next Government must uphold and champion the 2021 climate law and the binding limits on pollution agreed on a cross-party basis by the Dáil, and also agreed with our EU partners. The state must lead the transformations required, it cannot be left to grants, taxes and individual behaviour change. Only elected politicians can ensure the transition is fair, creating quality jobs and decent living standards while ensuring the solutions are accessible and affordable for all.***

Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:

- Affirm their absolute commitment to uphold the 2021 climate law and achieve the national carbon budgets, sectoral emissions ceilings and Ireland's EU obligations.
- Push the European Commission to adopt the proposal for a 90% reduction in EU emissions by 2040 and adopt 2035 and 2040 national carbon budgets in line with that.
- Ensure all climate policies and actions promote equality and address pre-existing inequalities including those based on gender, social class, race/ethnicity, religion and disability amongst others.
- Recognise care work as essential green work and key to our Just Transition, ensuring it is well-paid work and included meaningfully in Irish climate policy.
- Strengthen and resource an autonomous community sector, particularly in marginalised areas and amongst marginalised groups, to ensure their input into climate policies and actions.
- Ensure that the many spaces already within the curriculum of primary and secondary schools are fully utilised to provide students with the skills and knowledge to develop climate literacy.
- Develop a Public Education Campaign on climate change targeted at those outside the formal education system; develop and implement this in partnership with groups based in the community, including older people, younger people, women's groups and community groups.
- Introduce and implement comprehensive national human rights and environmental due diligence legislation to ensure all businesses respect human rights throughout

their value chains, including binding climate action obligations, strong gender perspectives, clear provisions to hold companies liable, and measures to ensure redress and access to justice for victims.

## **2. International climate action that is fair and funded**

***Internationally, the Government must champion climate action that is fast, fair and funded, to fulfil the Paris Agreement. This includes meeting Ireland's fair share of international climate finance and committing to an urgent and fair phase-out of fossil fuels.***

***A full fossil fuel phase-out in Ireland means going beyond addressing domestic consumption of fossil fuels. It must include addressing Ireland's financial and taxation policies that continue to invest in and facilitate large polluters globally.***

Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:

- Deliver on Ireland's international climate finance obligations of at least €500m per year and increase in line with Ireland's fair share of the new post-COP29 global climate finance goal.
- Push for an ambitious new global climate finance goal (New Collective Quantified Goal) at COP29, which is based on the needs of developing countries and prioritises public, grant-based finance.
- Urgently scale up Ireland's contributions to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage through significant, new, and innovative sources of finance, and develop a pathway to deliver Ireland's fair share of Loss and Damage finance of at least €1.5 billion per year by 2030.
- Cooperate internationally to push for new and substantial sources of funding for climate action, including the agreement on fairer taxation of corporate profits, extreme wealth, and fossil fuel production, and to progress global efforts on debt cancellation and international levies on aviation and shipping.
- Increase smallholder food producers' access to international climate finance that supports locally-led adaptation and resilience building.
- Stop the significant flows of private finance via investment managers, and of public finance via Ireland's Strategic Investment Fund, to harmful fossil fuel and industrial agribusiness activities in the Global South.
- Amend the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act to ensure it is fully fossil-free and does not support harmful agribusiness.
- Keep pressure on for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and reject the unconditional support for Israel's war on Palestinians among certain decision-makers in the EU and US. Hold Israel to account for its war crimes against the Palestinian people. Enact the Occupied Territories Bill and the Illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill.

### **3. Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels**

***As part of tackling the housing emergency, the next Government must make home energy upgrades so affordable and accessible that nobody has to live in cold, leaky accommodation and nobody needs a new fossil fuel boiler.***

Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:

- Introduce the promised minimum BER standards for rental properties by 2025, starting with the coldest, most inefficient homes, and ensure tenants are protected.
- Retrofit all social housing by 2030, prioritising the worst-performing buildings first.
- Establish a community energy advice service in every local authority, offering independent, tailored guidance on energy efficiency and renewable energy options.
- Pass a National Heat Law that sets an end-date for new fossil fuel boilers and ensures heat pumps and district heating systems are cheaper for households.
- Create a retrofit scheme specifically for rural homes that rely on solid fuel or oil boilers.
- Expand the Warmer Homes (free retrofit) Scheme to include HAP tenants, on the condition that a long-term lease is offered.
- Prioritise energy poverty measures for the most marginalised including older people living in badly insulated homes, Travellers living in trailers, lone parents - majority of women - living in inadequate housing and tenants renting from private landlords.
- Develop a comprehensive measurement of energy poverty that goes beyond expenditure, and that takes account of factors such as reduced use because of current high prices.

### **4. Clean, affordable renewable energy for people, not data centres and big tech**

***The next Government must break Ireland's dependence on dirty, expensive fossil fuels, often imported from rogue states, and make sure that the development of Ireland's abundant clean energy resources prioritises local communities, our collective power needs, and nature, rather than the demands of big business for ever more consumption.***

Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:

- A moratorium on more data centres coming online until any threat to the sustainability of our energy system from data centre expansion has passed.
- Plan to have a 100% renewable power system by 2035 and drive down gas demand over the next decade to near zero.
- Ensure that all fossil fuels are kept in the ground by ending all support for further exploration and extraction of coal, oil, and gas.
- Keep Ireland free of fracked gas and liquified natural gas imports and do not permit new infrastructure that prolongs our dependence on fossil fuels.

- Champion fossil fuel phase-out internationally by endorsing the proposal for a new Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Legislate to ban advertising for fossil fuels, advertising from companies or public bodies involved in fossil fuel production and distribution, as well as advertising promoting cars, boilers, and flights that use fossil fuels.
- Ensure fossil fuel lobbyists do not distort public policy for private profit by introducing legislation to amend the code of practice for designated public officials in order to limit interactions with fossil fuel lobbyists to only where strictly necessary to enable designated public officials to effectively regulate the industry and accelerate the transition to a fossil-free economy.

## **5. Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport**

***The next Government must make public transport, walking, and cycling so easy, safe, and cheap and make our electric car network so reliable and affordable that by 2030 an end to the sale of new fossil fuel cars is an obvious and uncontroversial next step.***

- Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:
- Fast track new public transport, particularly progressing a metropolitan rail system in Limerick and new Luas lines for Cork, Galway, Waterford, and Dublin.
- Guarantee a free school bus place for anyone who wants one. Roll out School Streets and Safe Routes to Schools to every school, ensuring a safe route to school by walking or cycling for anyone who lives within 3km.
- Make permanent the current 20% reduction in adult public transport fares and the 50% reduction for under 26-year-olds (on the Young Adult Travel Card). Roll out more flatfares nationwide like the two-euro 90-minute fare in Dublin.
- Achieve the commitment to invest at least €2 in public transport for every €1 in new roads.
- Ensure transport policy addresses diverse needs—safety, accessibility, and affordability for women, disabled individuals, and more—beyond work-home commutes, making public transport viable for all, including care journeys and safety concerns.
- Accelerate the rollout of Bus Connects and continue to develop the successful rural Links service, based on a vision of “every village, every hour”. Invest at least €50 million annually in the Rural Transport Programme.
- Increase investment in active transport to €400m per annum to reflect inflation.
- Prevent further growth of aviation emissions and ban private jets from landing in Ireland.

## **6. A fair deal for farmers, to feed Ireland and restore nature**

***The next Government must ensure the state, supermarkets, and food processors pay farmers enough to support sustainable forms of agriculture and land use that produce local food, clean water, and a countryside where family farms and nature thrive.***

Flagship policies we are asking all candidates and parties to commit to include:

- Secure fair prices for Irish farmers from the supermarkets and processors that dominate the food supply chain, through the new Agri-Food Regulator or by other means if necessary.
- Ensure that relevant national plans incentivise farmers for the essential things that their land provides to the wider community: food, water, carbon storage, nature, and recreation.
- Support women to fully participate in agriculture, through increased funding and equal access to resources and schemes.
- Ensure that the administrative and IT systems within government bodies managing agri-environment and farm plan schemes are adequately resourced and fit for purpose of eliminating delays in payments to farmers.
- Fund a Farmland Bird Monitoring Programme as a better reflection than the common farmland bird index of how threatened, Red-listed farmland birds are doing.
- Reform the legal purpose and governance of Irish state agencies, from Coillte and Bord na Móna to Teagasc and Bord Bia to align with our climate and nature goals.
- Support putting an end to the negotiations on the outdated EU-Mercosur free-trade agreement.
- Ensure all local development plans include provisions for public access to green spaces and supports for renewed biodiversity.
- Enact ambitious and long-overdue Marine Protected Areas (MPA) legislation to safeguard our seas. Designate 30% of Irish waters as MPAs and 10% as strictly protected.
- Design, fund and implement an ambitious National Nature Restoration Plan which will set nature on the pathway to recovery. Ringfence funding for nature in the Infrastructure Climate and Nature Fund. Support a separate EU Nature Restoration Fund.

## **7. A rapid response to the climate crisis as a critical public health issue**

***The climate crisis poses significant health risks, including air pollution, heat waves, and eco-anxiety, which disproportionately affect those already facing barriers to healthcare. Air pollution causes approximately 1600 premature deaths in Ireland every year, and extreme weather like flooding and storms can damage access routes to health services and the buildings housing them. Our health, both now and in the future, is intrinsically linked to the climate.***

- Adopt World Health Organisation air quality guidelines as legally binding targets by 2035.
- Commit to and accelerate the development of the Clean Air Act as per the Clean Air Strategy.
- Provide additional significant funding to the HSE's Climate Action Division to facilitate the implementation of the HSE's 2030 - 2050 Climate Action Strategy.

- Include eco-anxiety as a recognised concern in Ireland’s mental health policy, Sharing the Vision.
- Ensure climate-related health concerns such as air quality and extreme temperatures, are included in the Women’s Health Action Plan.
- Emphasise in the proposed public education campaign that the climate crisis is a critical public health issue.
- Support the transition to sustainable, healthier diets by expanding the sugar-sweetened drinks tax to apply to food and drink that is high in fat, salt, or sugar (HFSS), enacting mandatory reformulation. Use the proceeds to subsidise healthier, sustainable foods, particularly among those from disadvantaged communities.